



Michael F. Easley

Governor

April 2002

Volume 16 Number 4

William G. Ross Jr.

Secretary, DENR

SEVEN PARK PROJECTS APPROVED

P&R AUTHORITY ALSO ON BOARD WITH RADIO PLAN

By CHARLIE PEEK
Public Information Officer

The Parks and Recreation Authority in March approved \$2.25 million for capital improvements at four units of the state parks system, and \$1.93 million for land acquisition projects at three locations.

Also at its meeting at Goose Creek State Park, the authority gave tentative approval to spend up to \$250,000 for the NC Division of Parks and Recreation to integrate its mobile radio system with that of the NC Highway Patrol.

The capital improvements allocation will cover these projects:

- \$186,974 for safety improvements at the lake area of Cliffs of the Neuse State Park. The project will attempt to repair a dam spillway and boathouse roofing and allow handicap access to the boat rental area. The lake's swimming platform will also be replaced.



GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK SUPERINTENDENT SCOTT KERSHNER AND RANGER JAY GREENWOOD TAKE PARKS AND RECREATION AUTHORITY MEMBERS ON A TOUR OF THE PARK.

- \$501,670 for utilities improvements at Falls Lake State Recreation Area. Eleven sewage lift stations will be renovated, and public telephones will be installed at four public beaches.

- \$900,605 for replacement of playground equipment at Falls Lake and Jordan Lake state recreation areas. The equipment had been gradually removed over the years because wooden components had worn out or become unsafe.

- \$664,002 for renovations of the visitor's center at

Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve. The project will improve accessibility and expand the staff office and library space.

The requests by the division staff for capital improvements and land acquisition were based on projected revenues into the fund through the end of fiscal year 2001-02. And, they were scaled back somewhat, after state budget writers tapped the trust fund for \$5 million to help meet a current budget shortfall.

The apparent loss of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

From The Director's Desk

Dear Fellow Employees,

I'm sure that everyone in the division is keeping up with the news related to the state's budget shortfall and the pessimistic revenue projections for the next year or two. I wish I could tell you that none of what you have seen and heard in the news will affect the division, but I can't. There is a great deal of speculation regarding likely scenarios and about how the budget situation will play out, but the fact of the matter is, until the governor's staff has had a chance to review budget alternatives and analyze updated revenue figures, few people, if any, can know the complete picture. Therefore, rather than add my opinions to the confusion already generated, I'm going to deal with what I know and try to make sure you know what to expect in terms of process and timetables.

The governor has asked appointed and elected department heads to recommend a range of budget reductions up to 11 percent for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2002.

He will then review those recommendations and develop a budget proposal for presentation to the NC General Assembly when or before the short session begins in late May. Appropriations committees of the general assembly will likely start meeting to consider their alternatives sometime this month. No decision will be made before the general assembly meets and makes its determinations — usually sometime around the first week in July. The fact is that until the governor makes his recommendation to the general assembly, the general assembly adopts a budget and the governor signs that budget, we simply don't know what will happen next year.

I realize it is difficult not to listen to and worry about some of the rumors, but I encourage you to try. As someone much smarter than I once said, "Most of us spend 90 percent of our 'worrying' time on things that never happen." If you add that to another one of my other favorite pieces of wisdom — in chaos lies opportunity — the message becomes: instead of worrying about things we can't control, let's focus on ways to turn our current concerns into positive results. We have done it before — remember? The last major shortfall North Carolina experienced was in 1990, and by 1994 the State Park Bond Referendum was approved and the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund had been created. These actions were a direct result of developments that took place during, or as a result of, the 1990 shortfall (and much work by our staff and supporters).

I hope you will join me in spending our time trying to figure out what we can make happen as a result of, or after, this budget shortfall. Instead of worrying about things we can't control and letting the situation drag us down, let's keep our chins up and figure out a way to use this situation to our advantage.

Sincerely,

Phil

Philip K. McKnelly

SAND TRIMS FERRY SERVICE AT BEACH PARK

Sand migration into Cow Channel and unusually low springtime tides forced Hammocks Beach State Park to curtail ferry service to Bear Island during the busy Easter weekend. Visitors were advised to plan return trips by noon on Friday, 1 p.m. on Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday.

Superintendent Sam Bland said the advance planning to curtail service and cloudy weather during part of the weekend kept disruption to a minimum.

Portions of Cow Channel have regularly been dredged to keep the ferry service operating. Sand migration into the channel apparently has been made worse by a series of hurricanes since 1996, Bland said. This spring, the rate of infill outran the park's ability to arrange permits and contractors for dredging.

Bland has measured water levels of less than 4 inches during low tide in a 200-foot section of the approach channel.

The division's public information office issued a press release about the shortened ferry hours and notified several area news outlets by phone before the holiday weekend. Bland said that a private water taxi service, which uses shallow draft boats, also worked with park officials to make transportation available.

EIGHT RANGERS COMMISSIONED

Eight state park rangers from across the state were commissioned in March at the Raleigh offices of the NC Division of Parks and Recreation. They are: top row from left, Ron Anderson, Lumber River State Park; Robert Patterson, Hammocks Beach State Park; Dillard Cox, Goose Creek State Park; Chris Day, Falls Lake State Recreation Area; bottom row from left, Adam John Inman, Falls Lake State



Recreation Area; Trudy Whitney, Kerr Lake State Recreation Area; Jennifer Thoburn, Fort Fisher State Recreation Area; Walter Summerlin, Cliffs of the Neuse State Park.

IN HONOR OF EARTH DAY 2002 DENR ANNOUNCES A SUSTAINABILITY CONTEST

Contest begins March 1. Last entries accepted April 12.

This contest is to familiarize DENR employees with the DENR Sustainability Policy and Procedures in time for Earth Day, April 22.

DENR employees just need to go to the DENR Sustainability Committee Website, <http://www.sustainablenc.org/DENR>. Under the Sustainability Contest link (upper left of page) DENR employees can read the new DENR sustainability policy, and then enter a sustainability story or sustainability tip using the electronic contest entry form, located right on the contest page.

Three prizes will be awarded:

- One for the best-judged sustainability story that prevents wastes and/or minimizes any negative environmental impact.
- Another prize will be for the best-judged sustainability tip for preventing waste and/or minimizing any negative environmental impact.
- And for the third prize, all contest entries will be entered in a general drawing.

The sustainability stories and sustainability tips will be used by the DENR sustainability Liaisons Team for DENR sustainability education.

Sustainability is a lot more than recycling paper and cans. Incorporating sustainability in how things are done, in the office and field, not only prevents negative environmental impacts, it saves time and resources. DENR employees using sustainable thinking, in both big and small ways, have the potential to save DENR millions of dollars over the coming years. For example, the NC Museum of Natural Sciences recently changed the adhesive it uses to put program posters on core board, allowing hundreds of dollars of core boards to be reused again and again, instead of being landfilled. In another kind of example, the Division of Air Quality saved a \$10,000 connection cost, and a monthly electric bill for one of its state air sampling stations, by spending just \$300 for a solar panel, a boat battery and a connector device, also saving a measurable amount of air pollution from power plants.

DENR is looking for your sustainability related stories and sustainability tips, so enter the contest today, at <http://www.sustainablenc.org/DENR>.

PART F

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

those funds was spread among the capital improvement and land acquisition budgets along with grants for local government projects at the same percentages that govern allocations.

Among land acquisition projects, the authority allocated \$1.28 million toward the acquisition of 825 acres at Eno River State Park, and \$620,000 toward the purchase of 310 acres at South Mountains State Park. Additional funds for both projects will be sought from the Natural Heritage Trust Fund and the Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

In addition, \$25,000 was set aside for an access easement at Dismal Swamp for staff and contractors to be able to work at the site of a proposed visitor's center there. The division's property at Dismal Swamp is separated from the nearest state highway by the Dismal Swamp Canal.

The request for funds to improve the division's radio system was made by Lewis Ledford, Superintendent of State Parks. Ledford told the authority that the cost of integrating park radios with those of the highway patrol would be far less than the division maintaining a central radio office and a staff of dis-



AUTHORITY MEMBERS LEARN ABOUT PETTIGREW STATE PARK HISTORY FROM SUPERINTENDENT SID SHEARIN

patchers.

Ledford announced a few days later that the highway patrol's commander had given a green light to the joint radio project. A memorandum of understanding will be developed between the two agencies as soon as possible, Ledford said. Following that, a division task force will be assigned to launch the project.

"He recognized the opportunity for increases in officer safety, public emergency services and efficiencies in government," Ledford said.

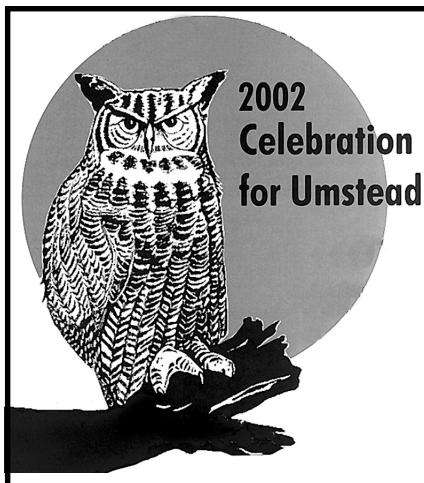
In the past, park rangers have often been out of contact with park offices and superiors because of the division's limited system of repeaters, especially in remote areas. The division has

been concerned about the safety of rangers who might be unable to call for backup in emergencies.

The authority is preparing to enter the 2001-02 cycle for making grants to local governments for recreation projects.

Division grants analyst John Poole said 68 applications have been received requesting a total \$11.5 million. About \$6.4 million is expected to be available when the authority meets in May to review the applications.

The authority toured Pettigrew State Park and Goose Creek State Park prior to their meeting and welcomed new members Todd Tilley of Hertford and Walt Israel of Belmont. They replace outgoing members Troy Boyd and John Runkle.



**A FUND-RAISING EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
APRIL 20, WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD STATE PARK**

**FOUR-MILE WALK/RUN
LIVE MUSIC
STORYTELLING
FOOD
ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY ZONE**

INFO: 852-2268 <http://umsteadcoalition.org>

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS MONTHLY ATTENDANCE REPORT FEBRUARY 2002

PARK	FEB.	TOTAL YTD	FEB.	TOTAL YTD	% CHANGE	
	2002	FEB. 2002	2001	FEB. 2001	(2001/2002)	
					FEB.	YTD
BOONES CAVE	1,009	2,774	1,108	3,069	-9%	-10%
CAROLINA BEACH	10,878	20,010	10,133	20,049	7%	0%
CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE	4,901	9,632	5,007	8,635	-2%	12%
CROWDER'S MOUNTAIN	18,813	36,723	16,113	31,692	17%	16%
ENO RIVER	21,105	40,495	19,558	38,790	8%	4%
OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN	2,380	4,284	2,552	5,212	-7%	-18%
FALLS LAKE	20,988	42,756	30,511	55,415	-31%	-23%
FORT FISHER	36,910	55,271	17,946	42,484	106%	30%
FORT MACON	51,024	99,794	47,670	90,650	7%	10%
GOOSE CREEK	8,932	17,391	6,476	13,613	38%	28%
GORGES	5,470	11,055	5,232	8,878	5%	25%
HAMMOCKS BEACH	6,012	15,030	6,348	13,389	-5%	12%
HANGING ROCK	15,445	29,793	13,276	27,256	16%	9%
JOCKEY'S RIDGE	22,287	42,060	18,504	36,704	20%	15%
JONES LAKE	4,088	8,084	5,752	10,400	-29%	-22%
JORDAN LAKE	20,259	49,615	30,756	57,288	-34%	-13%
KERR LAKE	54,712	110,920	45,744	85,460	20%	30%
LAKE JAMES	9,985	16,541	9,363	15,263	7%	8%
LAKE NORMAN	16,471	31,271	8,211	16,206	101%	93%
LAKE WACCAMAW	5,204	10,452	5,104	10,260	2%	2%
LUMBER RIVER	1,265	4,250	3,723	7,523	-66%	-44%
MEDOC MOUNTAIN	2,428	4,836	2,412	4,964	1%	-3%
MERCHANT'S MILLPOND	5,523	10,440	4,848	9,183	14%	14%
MORROW MOUNTAIN	18,120	35,220	19,980	37,040	-9%	-5%
MOUNT JEFFERSON	3,796	8,083	4,380	8,688	-13%	-7%
MOUNT MITCHELL	6,480	10,268	5,682	9,019	14%	14%
NEW RIVER	8,548	17,804	4,344	7,836	97%	127%
PETTIGREW	2,562	6,465	4,179	8,658	-39%	-25%
PILOT MOUNTAIN	21,446	39,005	18,384	36,348	17%	7%
RAVEN ROCK	7,050	12,687	6,346	13,235	11%	-4%
SINGLETARY LAKE	644	1,272	616	1,232	5%	3%
SOUTH MOUNTAINS	8,402	16,548	10,064	20,556	-17%	-19%
STONE MOUNTAIN	20,940	49,680	31,652	68,876	-34%	-28%
WEYMOUTH WOODS	1,853	3,928	1,105	3,331	68%	18%
WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD	32,345	56,541	17,424	37,962	86%	49%
SYSTEMWIDE TOTAL	478,275	930,978	440,503	865,164	9%	8%

STATE PARKS BIRDING BOOK READY

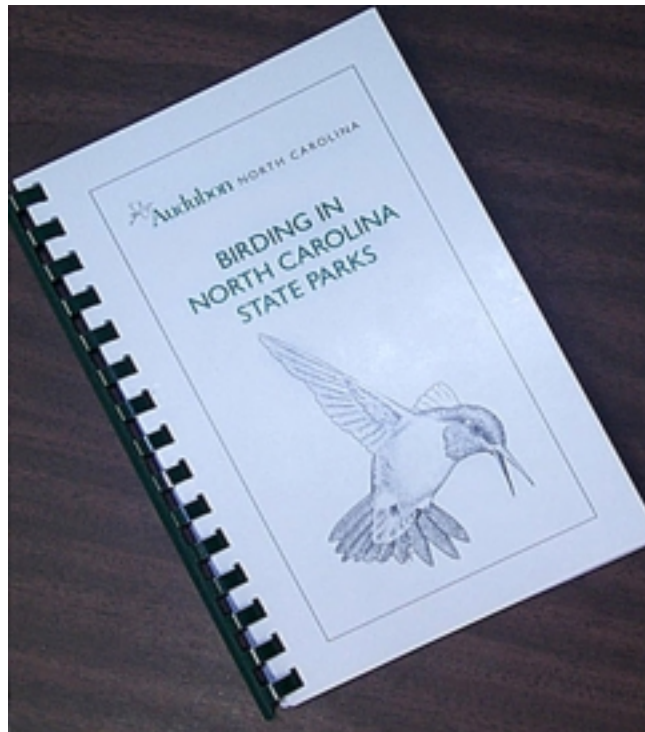
The long-awaited edition of *Birding in North Carolina State Parks* is coming off the presses this spring.

The 160-page softcover book is a collaborative effort by Audubon North Carolina and the NC Division of Parks and Recreation with significant contributions from park superintendents, rangers and division biologists, people with first-hand experience birding in state parks.

Attempts will be made to make the book available at as many state parks as possible, said Carol Tingley, the division's chief of planning and natural resources, who acted as one of the book's editors.

Volunteer editors Karen Bearden

THIS 160-PAGE SOFTCOVER BOOK IS A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BY AUDUBON NORTH CAROLINA, THE NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AND PARK RANGERS.



and Linda Rudd of Audubon North Carolina guided the contributions from a long list of dedicated birders. Lynn Barber, Nicole White Kennedy and Rob Sewell provided illustrations, and Lynne Lucas adapted division park maps for the book.

The book's detailed illustrations, maps and spiral-bound design make it a natural field guide as well as a handy desk reference. It also offers details on the natural landscape and facilities of each state park and recreation area, and often tidbits of history as well. A birding list and an appendix of resource publications are also included. The retail price is \$15.

Bearden said that the idea for the edition arose following the publication of Wake Audubon Society's popular *A Birdwatcher's Guide to the Triangle* in November.

Mission

The mission of the North Carolina Division of Parks & Recreation is:



- to protect North Carolina's natural diversity;
- to provide and promote outdoor recreation opportunities throughout North Carolina;
- and
- to exemplify and encourage good stewardship of North Carolina's natural resources

for all citizens and visitors of North Carolina.

The Steward

Division of Parks and Recreation — Public Information Office
1615 MSC — Raleigh, NC 27699-1615